

## Interdisciplinary Ideas

### LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Make an English/Spanish dictionary. Fold and staple 7 sheets of paper together to make a booklet. Write *My English/Spanish Dictionary* on the first page and letter the inside pages A to Z. Use Spanish words from the story to make entries in the dictionary in both English and Spanish.
2. List events from the story. In pairs, choose an event, write a letter about it from Ana to a friend in Mexico, put in an envelope (do not seal), glue to the bottom half of a page, and illustrate the event on the top half. Compile pages in chronological order, make a cover ("Letters from Ana") and take turns reading the letterbook.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

1. In small groups find Spanish dialogue used in everyday situations, such as "Como te llamas?" (COH-moh tay YAH-mahs) "What is your name?" (Keyword: survival Spanish teachers) Practice asking and answering questions in Spanish. Add words and pronunciations to your English/Spanish dictionary. (Language Arts #1.)
2. Learn how to make tortillas and tamales. (Keywords: making tortillas families; making tamales families) Take notes and report to class. Invite someone from Mexico to demonstrate how to make tortillas.

### MATH

1. Learn to convert American dollars to Mexican pesos. (Keyword: currency Mexican kids) Make word problems for the class to solve such as, "How many pesos would you need to buy an ice cream cone that costs \$2.00?"
  2. Obtain a menu from a local Mexican restaurant. If you had \$30 to spend on dinner, what might you order? What change would you have left? Justify your response.
- \* Visit [www.heartwoodethics.org](http://www.heartwoodethics.org) and choose Teaching Heartwood, Culture Keys, for additional cultural information and resources.

## Home at Last

Susan Middleton Elya  
2002  
New York: Lee & Low Books

### COURAGE

U.S.A./Mexican American  
Realistic Fiction  
Reading Time: 8 minutes

### CONCEPTS

Courage  
Loyalty  
Love  
Hope

### SUMMARY

**While celebrating the close bond between a young girl and her family, this story realistically portrays problems faced by Mexican immigrants in the United States. Ana understands how much her mother misses relatives and the difficulties she encounters due to the language barrier. Through courage, love, and loyalty, Ana helps lift her mother's spirits as her family pulls together to begin life in this new country. Felipe Davalos' vivid oil paintings clearly express the characters' emotions during a time of transition.**

### OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss courage, loyalty, love, and hope as they apply to the story. The student will become aware of difficulties immigrant families face and learn strategies for helping new classmates.

## After the Story

### Home at Last

#### DISCUSSION

1. Why is it more difficult for Mama than it is for Ana to begin a new life in the United States? What problems does Mama face? How does Ana help her mother?
2. What signs of love do you see in the story? What do family members say and do to show they care for one another? How do Ana and her father offer hope to her mother? Have you ever encouraged a parent or family member? Explain.
3. Why does it take courage for Ana's mother to attend evening school? What does Ana wonder about when her mother goes to school for the first time? Tell about worries you have had when beginning a new school or school year.
4. What character traits does Ana portray that you might look for in a friend?
5. Why do you think Ana's family came to the United States? What are their hopes? What do you think they miss about their village in Mexico? What would you miss if you had to leave your country?

#### ACTIVITIES

1. On a world map, locate Mexico. Identify countries and bodies of water bordering Mexico. Find states in the U.S.A. that border Mexico. (Keyword: Mexico map)
2. Organize a "Big Brother Big Sister" program for new students in your school. Tour the school with your special friends and introduce them to other students on the playground and in the lunchroom. Let them know you are there to help.
3. Invite a foreign language teacher to teach a lesson in a language other than English. Afterwards discuss how you felt, what you understood, and why you understood certain parts of the lesson. List what was helpful, such as expressions or body language. In small groups research tips for helping non-English speaking students. (Keyword: helping non-English speaking students) Take notes and report to class. If the opportunity arises, volunteer to help an ESL student.

#### EXTENSION

1. With your family, plan ways you can help new families who move to your neighborhood. When an opportunity arises, carry out one of your plans.
2. Retell the story at home. Ask family members to tell about experiences that involved courage in adjusting to new situations. With permission share with the class.

#### WRAP-UP

1. In *My Heartwood Journal* write about how courage relates to loyalty and love in the story and/or in your own family. Include as many examples as possible.
2. Copy the following saying, and write a paragraph about how it relates to your own experience: "A mal tiempo, buena cara" (Face difficulties with a smile). Use one or two Heartwood attributes in your explanation.

#### VOCABULARY

(Look online for help with pronunciation—Keyword: survival Spanish teachers)

**si**  
**la escuela**  
**me gusta**  
**se llama**

**Ingles**  
**Que dijeron?**  
**al apartamento**  
**Vamonos!**

**a casa**  
**el maestro**  
**Buena suerte!**  
**donde esta**